

ACS MONTHLY NEWSLETTER

AMERICAN CITIZENS SERVICES

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CONTACT US!

American Citizen Services
U.S. Embassy Seoul
188 Sejong-daero, Jongno-gu
Seoul 110-710, Korea

- or -

American Citizen Services
U.S. Embassy, Seoul
Unit #15550
APO AP 96205-5550

Tel: 02-397-4040 (Passport)
Tel: 02-397-4114 (Other Services)
Fax: 02-397-4080
DSN: 721-4114

English: www.asktheconsul.org/
Korean: <http://korean.seoul.usembassy.gov>
E-mail: seoulinfo@state.gov
Facebook: www.facebook.com/americansinkorea

GREETINGS FROM THE ACS CHIEF

What a difference a year makes! On November 23, 2010, those of you who were in Korea doubtless remember the increased tensions between North and South Korea after the North fired artillery shells on the island of Yeonpyeong off the west coast of South Korea. From that point until close to Christmas there were concerns that hostilities could break out between the two countries. Although the situation never got to the point that we advised U.S. citizens to consider leaving Korea, many Americans inquired about our evacuation plans and many more registered for our email message system.



Presently things are calm on the Korean Peninsula, and I have noticed that fewer people are registering for our information system. Of course, I realize that if you're reading this you're probably already registered, but I'd ask you to encourage your friends and relatives in Korea to do the same. As you know, we put out useful general information for Americans in Korea, and in the event of some type of natural or man-made emergency you'll receive our latest guidance. All you have to do is provide us your email address via the Consular Section's website at <http://www.asktheconsul.org>. After going to this site simply fill in your email address in the box within the section entitled "Sign up for our free email service" and hit the submit button. Above this box on the same webpage is a box entitled "Register Your Stay in Korea." This allows you to register in the State Department's STEP or "Smart Traveler Enrollment Program." Wherever you travel in the world this program allows you to get the latest news and guidance from the nearest U.S. embassy or consulate.

As promised last month, this newsletter has information on the Overseas Voting Program. The 2012 elections are only one year away, and some state primaries are as early as January 2012. Please check out this information.

The holiday season is fast approaching, so if you plan to travel back to the U.S. or somewhere else internationally, make sure that your passport and those of your family members all have at least six months validity, and also that you have enough passport pages. If not, then make an appointment with us to renew your passport or add pages, or visit our Website to learn how you can do these things by courier service.

Have a wonderful Thanksgiving!

Robert (Buck) Waldrop
ACS Chief

HOLIDAY CLOSURES

The Embassy will be closed on the following days:

November 11, 2011: (Friday) Veterans Day

November 24, 2011: (Thursday) Thanksgiving Day

The ACS Unit will be closed for routine services, including passport processing, on November 11 and November 24. Please plan ahead, and enjoy the holiday!

Please be advised that the days just before and after a holiday are usually busier in the American Citizen Services Unit of the Embassy with all appointments taken. Do not be surprised at a longer wait for consular services on those days.

A complete list of all of our holiday closings for 2011 is available on-line at <http://seoul.usembassy.gov/>

CONSULAR SERVICES IN BUSAN NOVEMBER 21-22 AND BEYOND

The Embassy offers consular services for American citizens in Busan for two days each month. Our scheduled visits for the next several months are listed below.

During these visits, U.S. citizens can apply for U.S. passports, additional visa pages in their current passports, Consular Reports of Birth Abroad, and Social Security cards. A consular officer will also offer notarial services and provide information regarding voting, federal benefits, and enrollment with the Embassy. The consular staff is also available to assist with emergencies involving U.S. citizens. Any questions about requirements should be directed by email to seoul_acs@state.gov.

Officials from the Embassy's ACS Unit will next be in Busan on Monday, November 21, and Tuesday, November 22, 2011. A Consular Officer will be available on November 21, from 1:00–4:00 p.m. and on November 22, from 9:00 a.m. to noon at the American Presence Post (APP), Lotte Gold Rose Building (also known as the Job Center Building), #150-3, Yangjung-dong, Busanjin-gu, Room No. 612. Directions to the APP can be found here: <http://busan.usconsulate.gov/contactus.html>.

Please note that an appointment is now required for services in Busan.

Call the U.S. Embassy to schedule an appointment at 02-397-4114. Please specify that you would like to make an appointment for consular services at the Busan office and which date you would prefer (it can be any of those listed below). Be sure to call by noon on the Friday prior to the visit. For the November outreach, please make your appointment by Friday, November 18th at noon.

Our Busan outreach dates for next month will be:

Dec. 19-20, 2011

POSTAL DELIVERY SERVICES

As noted in last month's newsletter, a large number of passports have not yet been picked up by applicants. Therefore, the American Citizens Services (ACS) Unit now requires a delivery company form to be filled out for each passport application. The forms are available at the ACS Unit. If a passport arrives at the Embassy and the customer has not arranged to pick it up within 30 days, the passport will automatically be sent to the address provided on the delivery form and any postage will be paid on delivery. This policy will not affect delivery to customers with APO addresses or who receive their passports back via the military passport courier system.

ALL APPOINTMENT SYSTEM

The ACS Unit began requiring appointments for all non-emergency, routine services on June 15, 2011. This is also a worldwide policy for all U.S. embassies and consulates. Routine services include passport and additional pages applications, requests for Consular Reports of Birth Abroad, Social Security card and benefit applications, and notarial services.

Requiring appointments for all our non-emergency, routine services means that we'll be able to serve everyone more quickly and efficiently -- it will lessen considerably the long lines and busy waiting room that we often had during non-appointment sessions. Of course, we'll always take care of U.S. citizens with emergencies whether they have an appointment or not. Please note that notarial services are not considered emergency appointments.

To make an appointment for routine consular services, please see our website: http://seoul.usembassy.gov/acs_appt.html.

QUESTION OF THE MONTH: I LOST MY SOCIAL SECURITY CARD AND I NEED TO REPLACE IT. WHAT SHOULD I DO? I WANT TO APPLY FOR SOCIAL SECURITY BENEFITS. HOW DO I DO THAT?

A: You may apply for a replacement Social Security card or drop off paperwork to apply for Social Security benefits through ACS. It takes approximately three to six months to receive the new card in Korea. For information about application requirements, please visit the Social Security Administration's website at <http://www.ssa.gov/ssnumber/>. We do not have a Social Security Administration office in Seoul, so we forward all applications to the Regional Office of the Social Security Administration in Manila, Philippines for processing. Specific questions about Social Security benefits should be directed to the Regional Office:

Email: FBU.Manila@ssa.gov

Tel: (63)(2)301-2000 (Ex. 5)

Fax: (63)(2) 708-9723 & (63)(2) 708-9714

Website: www.ssa.gov

CAUTION IN ENTERTAINMENT DISTRICTS

Itaewon and Shinchon are well known entertainment districts in Korea that are also considered a higher-risk area for crime. Please use caution in all entertainment and nightlife districts throughout Korea. Recently a small number of incidents involving U.S. citizens in these areas have included physical and sexual assaults, theft of purses, wallets, and drugs allegedly slipped into drinks.

VOTING

The U.S. Presidential election will be held on Tuesday Nov. 6, 2012.

Also during this election, 33 U.S. Senate seats will be voted on, as well as all 435 seats in the U.S. House of Representatives which will make up the 113th Congress. The election will also encompass 11 state gubernatorial races as well as many state legislature races, ballot questions and referendums.

U.S. citizens residing overseas have the right to vote in both primaries and elections. In order to receive a ballot for any of the elections, including the presidential election, you MUST be registered to vote. The Federal Voting Assistance Program recommends that all U.S. citizens register to vote in January of every year or at least 90 days before the specific election you want to vote in.

Stay tuned to the ACS Newsletter for the most up to date information about upcoming primaries and elections. The following states will hold Presidential Primaries in January 2012:

South Carolina – January 21, 2012

Florida – January 31, 2012

For more information on how to register to vote in these primaries or any other voting related questions please check www.fvap.gov or contact the U.S. Embassy Seoul American Citizen Services Unit at Vote-Seoul@state.gov.

TRAVEL WARNINGS

The U.S. Department of State has recently issued travel warnings or travel alerts for the following countries and regions. If you are traveling to any of these regions in the near future, please consult travel.state.gov for more information.

Travel Warnings:

[Eritrea](#) 11/04/2011
[Kenya](#) 11/04/2011
[Guinea](#) 11/04/2011
[Korea, Democratic People's Republic of](#) 11/03/2011
[Iran](#) 10/21/2011
[Nigeria](#) 10/13/2011
[Lebanon](#) 10/12/2011
[Mauritania](#) 10/12/2011
[Mali](#) 10/04/2011
[Syria](#) 09/30/2011
[Libya](#) 09/22/2011
[Algeria](#) 09/19/2011
[Iraq](#) 09/13/2011
[Yemen](#) 09/02/2011
[Somalia](#) 08/19/2011
[Chad](#) 08/16/2011
[Haiti](#) 08/08/2011
[Pakistan](#) 08/08/2011
[Niger](#) 08/05/2011
[Saudi Arabia](#) 08/05/2011
[Central African Republic](#) 07/28/2011
[Colombia](#) 07/22/2011
[Congo, Democratic Republic of the](#) 07/19/2011
[Republic of South Sudan](#) 07/12/2011
[Israel, the West Bank and Gaza](#) 06/22/2011
[Sudan](#) 06/22/2011
[Cote d'Ivoire](#) 06/16/2011

[Philippines](#) 06/14/2011
[Burundi](#) 06/01/2011
[Uzbekistan](#) 04/25/2011
[Mexico](#) 04/22/2011
[Afghanistan](#) 03/08/2011
[Nepal](#) 01/12/2011

Travel Alerts:

[Egypt](#) 11/07/2011
[Congo, Democratic Republic of the](#) 11/03/2011
[Thailand](#) 10/27/2011
[India](#) 10/18/2011
[Worldwide](#) 10/11/2011
[Japan](#) 10/07/2011
[Tunisia](#) 10/05/2011
[Worldwide](#) 10/01/2011
[Bhutan](#) 09/23/2011
[India](#) 09/23/2011
[Nepal](#) 09/23/2011
[9-11 Anniversary](#) 09/02/2011
[Bahrain](#) 08/19/2011
[Zambia](#) 08/11/2011
[Pacific Typhoon Season](#) 06/02/2011
[Hurricane Season 2011](#) 06/01/2011

Worldwide Caution January 31, 2011

http://travel.state.gov/travel/cis_pa_tw/pa/pa_4787.html

For additional information about these travel warnings and alerts, please go to this site:

http://travel.state.gov/travel/cis_pa_tw/tw/tw_1764.html

EMBASSY CONTACT INFORMATION

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U.S. Embassy Seoul
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Seoul, Korea 110-710

- or -

American Citizen Services
U.S. Embassy, Seoul
Unit #15550
APO AP 96205-5550

Tel: 02-397-4040 (Passport Inquiry line)

Tel: 02-397-4114 (All other services)

Fax: 02-397-4080

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English: <http://www.asktheconsul.org/>

Korean: <http://korean.seoul.usembassy.gov>

E-mail: seoulinfo@state.gov

Facebook: www.facebook.com/americansinkorea

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